

Message Text

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SUBJ: PRIVATE URUGUAYAN REACTIONS TO DIFFERENCES WITH U.S.

1. SUMMARY: THE SHARP RESPONSE OF THE GOU TO SECRETARY VANCE'S STATEMENT OF FEBRUARY 24 REFLECTED THE FEELINGS OF MANY URUGUAYAN OFFICIALS, BUT PARTICULARLY THE HARDLINERS. MODERATES IN THE GOU WHO SHARE OUR MORAL CONCERNS BELIEVE THAT OUR TACTICS MAY HAVE HAMPERED THEIR EFFORTS AND WILL THUS BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. AMONG THE INFORMED POPULACE, APART FROM FORMER POLITICIANS AND OTHERS WITH THEIR OWN AXES TO GRIND, URUGUAYANS GENERALLY SEEMED TO FEEL HURT AT BEING LUMPED TOGETHER WITH ARGENTINA AND ETHIOPIA AND DEALT WITH HARSHLY BY A NATION FOR WHICH THEY FEEL GREAT AFFINITY AND WHICH THEY HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED A FRIEND. CONCERN OVER THE UNPRECEDENTED EXCHANGE OF CRITICISM BETWEEN THIS COUNTRY AND THE U.S. REACHED THROUGHOUT THE POPULACE. NEVERTHELESS, THE MAN IN THE STREET, SUFFERING FROM

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CONTINUING LOSS OF REAL INCOME FOR WHICH HE BLAMES THE MILITARY, MAY BE DERIVING SOME SATISFACTION THAT SOMEONE ELSE IS ABLE TO CRITICIZE AND, PERHAPS, APPLY A REIN OF SORTS TO THE MEN IN UNIFORM. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH REACTIONS TO THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT OF FEBRUARY 24 AND THE GOU'S ANGRY RESPONSE THERETO VARIED WIDELY, A DIS-

CERNIBLE PATTERN OF OPINION HAS DEVELOPED. THE REACTION OF MOST INFORMED URUGUAYANS, OFFICIAL AND NON-OFFICIAL, WAS ONE OF INITIAL RESENTMENT, SOMETIMES STRONGLY FELT. THIS CAME IN PART AS THE RESULT OF A DEEPLY ROOTED CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY AND NON-INTERVENTION AND IN PART AS THE RESULT OF BEING ROUPED FOR DENUNCIATION ALONG WITH ARGENTINA AND ETHIOPIA. URUGUAY HAS A LONG HISTORY (PRE-DATING THE NEW DEAL BY ALMOST TWO DECADES) OF ADVANCED SOCIAL LEGISLATION AND AN EVEN LONGER TRADITION OF DEMOCRATIC IDEALS, AND PEOPLE WERE OFFENDED AT BEING LUMPED TOGETHER WITH ETHIOPIA. ALSO, WHILE SYMPATHETIC WITH ARGENTINA IN ITS STRUGGLE WITH ARMED SUBVERSION, THE URUGUAYANS RESENTED BEING PUT IN A CLASS WITH A COUNTRY IN WHICH, IN THE WORDS OF ONE SENIOR OFFICIAL, "MORE PEOPLE ARE FREQUENTLY KILLED IN ONE DAY THAN WERE KILLED IN URUGUAY IN THE WHOLE STRUGGLE WITH THE TUPAMAROS." WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE HARDLINERS, THE FEELING IS MORE OF HURT THAN INDIGNATION. THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW A FRIEND CAN, AS THEY SEE IT, SO MISJUDGE THE SITUATION IN URUGUAY AND THEN APPLY PUNITIVE MEASURES IN ADDITION. FINALLY, THERE IS A MOOD OF CONCERN AT SEEING THEIR GOVERNMENT AND THE USG EXCHANGING SHARP CRITICISMS. THIS IS UNPRECEDENTED IN THEIR HISTORY. THEY FEEL A REAL AFFINITY FOR THE UNITED STATES, LOOK TO THE U.S. AS THEIR NATURAL FRIEND, ALLY, AND ULTIMATE GUARANTOR, AND ARE DEEPLY TROUBLED BY EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS.

3. AMONG OFFICIALS THE SENSE OF OUTRAGE WHICH FANNED FLAMES OF XENOPHOBIC NATIONALISM WAS PROBABLY BEST EXPRESSED IN THE GOU'S FORMAL RESPONSES TO THE VANCE STATEMENT. MILITARY PIQUE WAS EVIDENT ALSO AT A RECENT RECEPTION TO PRESENT OUR NEW ARMY ATTACHE - ONLY 11 OF 114 URUGUAYAN OFFICERS INVITED ATTENDED. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE MANY MODERATES IN GOVERNMENT WHO SHARE THE U.S.' MORAL OBJECTIVES BUT WHO BELIEVE REGRETFULLY THAT OUR TACTICS NOT ONLY DID VIOLENCE TO IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES BUT ALSO HURT THEIR EFFORTS AND WILL BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

4. NON-OFFICIAL URUGUAYANS WHO ARE BEST ACQUAINTED WITH THIS SITUATION ARE PRINCIPALLY THOSE, SUCH AS FORMER POLITICIANS, WHO AVIDLY MONITOR ALL PUBLIC AFFAIRS. THEY REFLECT SYMPATHY TO THE U.S. POSITION (AND AMONG SOME STRONG APPROVAL) AS THEY ARE TO ALMOST ANYTHING WHICH THEY VIEW AS PRESSURE ON THE GOU TO LIBERALIZE. THEIR ULTIMATE GOAL, OF COURSE, IS REINSTITUTION OF PARTY POLITICS AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND THEIR ATTITUDE (AND POSSIBLY TEMPORARY DISPENSATION OF NON-INTERVENTIONIST PRINCIPLE) IS COLORED BY THIS GOAL. THE PRINCIPAL MEDIA ORGAN REFLECTING THEIR VIEWS IS EL DIA, AN OPPOSITION DAILY WHICH SHOWED CAUTIOUS SYMPATHY FOR THE U.S. POSITION AND AVOIDED ANYTHING APPEARING TO SUPPORT THE GOU LINE. IN FACT, EL DIA TOLD USIS THAT IT HAD NOT PUBLISHED AN EMBASSY STATEMENT BECAUSE THE GOU HAD CONCURRENTLY RELEASED A STATEMENT CONTRADICTING THE

EMBASSY ON THE MINOR DETAILS. BY NOT PRINTING OUR STATEMENT
IT FELT ABLE TO AVOID PRINTING THE GOU RELEASE, ITS REAL
OBJECTIVE.

5. AS BEST WE CAN TELL WITHOUT A FORMAL POLL, THE MAN IN THE
STREET IS BASICALLY IGNORANT OF THE NUANCES INVOLVED AND PERHAPS
LARGELY APATHETIC. PEOPLE DO NOT MIND SEEING MILITARY AID CUT
BUT THEY ARE NOT SURE THAT ECONOMIC AID WILL NOT BE AFFECTED
AND THEY SEEM TO FEEL THAT U.S. ECONOMIC SUPPORT IS MUCH MORE
IMPORTANT TO EACH OF THEM THAN IT IS. WE PERCEIVE THAT POPULACE
GENERALLY MAY SHARE THE ATTITUDES DESCRIBED IN PARA 2 ABOVE BUT
PROBABLY WITH ANOTHER WRINKLE. THE AVERAGE CITIZEN, WE BELIEVE,
RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED INCREASED MILITARY DOMINATION AND THE
ASSOCIATED RESTRAINTS IN 1973 IN THE HOPE THAT SECURITY,
STABILITY AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY WOULD FOLLOW. THIS HOPE HAS BEEN
BASICALLY FULFILLED BUT REAL WAGES HAVE CONTINUED TO DROP AND
SOME OF THE POLITICAL/SOCIAL RESTRAINTS ARE THUS FELT MORE
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KEENLY, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY BELIEVE THE TUPAMARO THREAT,
(WHICH THEY DO NOT WISH TO SEE RETURN) IS REMOVED.

6. HOW ALL THIS WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE RENEWED FUROR, WHICH
WE FULLY EXPECT WHEN THE U.S. REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN
URUGUAY (AND THE GOU'S REACTION TO IT) BECOMES PUBLIC, REMAINS
TO BE SEEN. RIGHT NOW, WITH THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS RECEIVING
LESS COVERAGE THAN A FEW DAYS AGO, WE FEEL WE ARE IN THE EYE
OF THE STORM.
SIRACUSA

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